

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 000296

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR INR/R/MR; IIP/RW; IIP/RNY; BBG/VOA; IIP/WEU; AF/PA;
EUR/WE /P/SP; D/C (MCCOO); EUR/PA; INR/P; INR/EUC; PM; OSC ISA
FOR ILN; NEA; WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC/WEUROPE; DOC FOR ITA/EUR/FR
AND PASS USTR/PA; USINCEUR FOR PAO; NATO/PA; MOSCOW/PA;
ROME/PA; USVIENNA FOR USDEL OSCE.

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - New Chilean President - Iran
PARIS - Tuesday, January 17, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

New Chilean President
Iran

(B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Headlines and editorials are dominated by Prime Minister
Villepin's plans to promote employment for young people and
those over the age of 57.

Today's major international story in the national and regional
press is the "Triumph of Women in Liberia and Chile" (right-of-
center Le Figaro's headline). Le Monde's front page also hails
the victories of Bachelet and Johnson-Sirleaf and adds Tarja
Halonen who won the first round of the presidential election
in Finland. (See Part C)

Iran continued to elicit reports and commentaries over the
weekend particularly in light of Russia's proposal that
Teheran enrich uranium on Russian soil. Le Figaro's headline
in the Saturday-Sunday edition of the paper: "The U.S. and
Europe Together Against Iran." (See Part C)

The American raid in the Bajaur tribal zone on January 13 was
widely noted in the print and electronic press on Monday. Le
Figaro's New York correspondent commented on "The U.S.'s
Embarrassed Silence." "From the White House to the Pentagon to
the State Department or the CIA, the instructions with regard
to the press appeared to be 'no comment.'"

The Sunday weekly paper le Journal du Dimanche carries a full-
page report entitled: "A Prisoner of the CIA in Baghdad." The
article tells the story of Abdul Jabbar al-Kubaysi, former
head of the Iraqi Patriotic Alliance who today lives in France
and who was arrested in 2004. Of his time in jail al-Kubaysi
says: "the only thing that it taught me is the true nature of
American democracy."

In the Monday edition of economic right-of-center Les Echos
foreign affairs specialist Jacques Hubert-Rodier pens an op-ed
entitled: "New Strategy for the Middle East." "The American
president is going to have to reformulate his strategy for the
Middle East with Ariel Sharon's successors. This redefinition
is going to be necessary within a broad context because beyond
the Middle East, Iraq after Saddam is far from being the model
of democracy for the rest of the region that President Bush
had hoped for."

Le Figaro's Washington correspondent Philippe Gelie comments
on First Lady Laura Bush's position within the Administration:
"The First Lady is increasingly on the front line to defend
the President or represent him abroad. During George Bush's
first term she would leave the White House only to inaugurate
libraries and to visit kindergartens. Yesterday she was the
U.S.'s official representative at the swearing in ceremony of
Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in Liberia. In the galaxy of political
women who surround the American President, the First Lady is
winning back her place, the first."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

New Chilean President

"Moving to the Left"

In regional La Nouvelle Republique du Centre Ouest
editorialist Herve Cannel writes (01/17): "From Santiago to
Brasilia, from La Paz to Caracas the South American continent
is veering left. A moderate left maybe. that has nothing to do
with the 'barbudos' who called for armed revolution against
the Yankees in the 1960s. But after decades of exaggerated
conservatism encouraged by the Pentagon that was implementing
to the letter the Monroe Doctrine making South America
Washington's own backyard, the rise to power of a number of
progressive leaders marks a definite change."

"The New Map of the World"

Pierre Rousselin's editorial in right-of-center Le Figaro (01/14): "Iraq is no longer dictating the map of the world. Today, one counts one's allies vis--vis the danger Iran's nuclear program presents. Angela Merkel's meeting at the White House unofficially designates her as reunited Europe's voice in the U.S. with regard to Iran. This marks a radical shift from the Europe's position during the Iraqi crisis. The transatlantic reconciliation is rather spectacular. It is not the fruit of chance but the result of hard work on both sides over the last few months. In Iran, President Ahmanidejad is counting on Europe's weakness and on George W. Bush's difficulties in Iraq. This calculation could be wrong and because of his repeated provocations he is only isolating himself further."

"Iran's Well Thought Out Nuclear Strategy"

Renaud Girard, a senior reporter for right-of-center Le Figaro, wrote an analysis in Saturday's edition of the daily. He argues that (01/14): "The U.S. is not a concern for Iran because it is bogged down in Iraq. The Mullahs know that Washington's priority is troop withdrawal in the region. The Europeans are not much of a concern either because the Mullahs know that the Europeans, frozen by repentance and pacifism, are morally weak. They are also militarily weak, having drastically reduced their armed forces since the fall of the Berlin wall. As for the Israelis, they will think twice before striking nuclear sites in Iran, if only to avoid re-igniting the battle on the Lebanese border, held by force by the Hezbollah, a militia that is pledged to Teheran. The Board of Governors of the AIEA is going to have to deal with this issue, which it will then pass on to the UNSC that will in turn take its time to reflect on the possibility of economic sanctions. Nothing to worry about..."

STAPLETON